

THE MĚNTRA TRADITIONS.

THE following traditions were communicated to me by Bâtin PA' ÎNAH, who claims to be the head of all the Bâtins of the MĚntra tribes. He has resided in Johol for the last fifteen years or so. His original name was KOLOR, and his native place was Tânah Tâseh in Jĕlĕbu.

Some of these legends somewhat resemble German stories on the same subjects.

TŪHAN DIBĀWAH made the earth, and lives beneath it; it is supported by an iron staff sustained by iron cross-bars; beneath these again is Tânah Nyâyek, which is inhabited by a sort of *sĕtan*, who have children not born in the ordinary way, but pulled out of the pit of the stomach. They were visited by MĚRTANG, the first *Póyang*, who brought back this account of them.

TŪHAN DIBĀWAH dwells beneath Tânah Nyâyek, and by his power supports all above him.

The earth was first peopled through MĚRTANG, the first *Póyang*, and BĚLO his younger brother. Their mother was TANAH SAKEPAL (a handful of earth) and their father AYER SATTIK (a drop of water).

They came from Tânah Bangun in the sky, and returned to it, taking with them a house from Ulu Kĕnâboi, on the other side of Jĕlĕbu, which flows into the Pahang. BĚLO died, and when he was buried, a *mĕngkârong** came towards the grave, and MĚRTANG threw his *pârang* at it, and cut off his tail, and the *mĕngkârong* ran away leaving his tail behind him, and BĚLO thereupon came to life again, and left his grave and returned to his house.

**Mĕngkârong*, lizard, small variety.

When MĚRTANG took his house away with him to Tânah Bangun, a dog, the first of the species, appeared where the house had been, and was prevented by MĚRTANG's power from attacking mankind. Then BĚLO had a dog at his house; from this dog came the tiger, which devours mankind and animals. When MĚRTANG left the earth for Tânah Bangun, he flew away with his house in the air.

BĚLO went to Tânah Bangun by the sea on foot; he was so tall that the water only reached to his knees.

Originally the sky was very low, but BĚLO raised it with his hands, because he found it in the way of his pestle when he raised it to pound his *padi*.

MĚRTANG took his youngest sister to wife, and from them are descended the MĚntra.

BĚLO married the other sister, but they had no offspring.

In course of time the descendants of MĚRTANG multiplied to such an extent that he went to TŪHAN DIBĀWAH and represented the state of things, which TŪHAN DIBĀWAH remedied by turning half of mankind into trees.

In those days men did not die, but grew thin with the waning of the moon, and waxed fat as she neared the full, and when their numbers had again increased to an alarming extent, To' ĘNTAH, the son of MĚRTANG and the first *Bâtin*, brought the matter to his father's notice. The latter wished things to remain as they were, but BĚLO said it was better they should die like the "*písang*," which leaves young shoots behind it, and leave children behind them when they died, and the matter was submitted to TŪHAN DIBĀWAH, who decided in favour of BĚLO's view, so that since then men have died leaving their children behind them.

In the earliest times there used to be three suns—husband, wife and child—and there was no night, there being always one sun left in the sky, if the others had set. In those days people slept as they felt inclined, and there were no divisions of time.

After a long time To' ĘNTAH thought the heat was too great, and he devised a plan for reducing it, in pursuance of which, he went to the moon, which then gave no light, and told her to call her husband Bintang Tûnang, the evening star, and the stars their children, and to put them into her mouth, but not to swallow them, and to

await his return, when she had carried out his wishes, he went to the female sun, and by representing that the moon had swallowed her husband and children, induced her to swallow completely her husband and child—the other two suns. To' ĚNTAH having thus gained his end, returned to the moon, and told her she could release her husband and children, which she did flinging them out into the sky again.

As soon as she discovered this deception practised on her, the sole remaining sun waxed very wrath, and withdrew in dudgeon to the other side of the heavens, declaring that when the moon came across her path she would devour her, a promise which she carries out at the time of eclipses.

It was from this time, this separation between the sun and moon, that the division between day and night, and the rule of the moon and the stars over the latter took place.

Till the time of Bâtin To' ĚNTAH men used not to drink, no water was to be had, and the sensation of thirst was unknown. It came about in this way. One day To' ĚNTAH shot a monkey with a blow-pipe, and made a fire, and cooked and ate the monkey, after which he became sensible of a desire to imbibe something, and went about in search of water, but could find none, not even an "akar" (water-giving liane, monkey-rope). The "akar" did not produce water then. At last he came upon an old *jĕlótong* (a "gĕtah") stump, and through a hole in it heard the sound of water trickling down below; he fastened a "rôtan mânau" (a variety of rattan of which walking sticks are made) above outside, and then let himself down into the hole by it till he reached the water, and there he slaked his thirst. He then made his way out again by the "rôtan," and when leaving the spot he saw a large white *lĕlâbi* or *lâbi-lâbi* (a sort of turtle) issue from the hole with a vast body of water, and begin chasing him; he ran for his life, and called to the elephant for help, but they were driven away by the water; then To' ĚNTAH met a tiger, whose help he likewise begged, the tiger accordingly attacked the head of the *lĕlâbi*, but could do it no harm. To' ĚNTAH continued his flight till he met a *sĕlâdang*, whom he implored to come to his rescue, and the *sĕlâdang* (a sort of bison) trampled on the *lĕlâbi*, but to no purpose. He next begged the aid of the rhinoceros, but

equally without effect, and they had to fly before the *lĕlābi*. At last he had to apply for the intervention of the *kanchil* (the smallest of all the deer kind, not so large as a hare); the *kanchil* said: "What can small creatures like us do?" To' ĚNTAH said: "I have asked all the others, and they have been able to do nothing." Then said the *kanchil*: "Very well, we will try; you get to one side." And he called together an army of *kanchil*, the whole of the race, and said: "If we do not kill the *lĕlābi*, we all perish, but if we kill him, all is well."

Then they all jumped on to the *lĕlābi*, which was of great size, and stamped on him with their tiny hoofs, till they had driven holes in his head and neck and back and killed him.

But in the meantime the body of water which accompanied the *lĕlābi* had increased to a vast extent, and formed what is now the sea.

After the destruction of the *lĕlābi*, the *kanchil* asked To' ĚNTAH what was to be his reward for the service he had performed, on which To' ĚNTAH replied that he would take the root of the *kledek* (a sort of yam) and the *kanchil* could have the leaves for his share, and they have accordingly ever since been the food of the *kanchil*.

From Ūlu Kĕnāboi To' ĚNTAH went to Pagar-rŭyong* (in Sumatra), and his son To' TĚRJĚLI came across again thence and settled in Jĕlĕbu.

To' TĚRJĚLI had eight sons—Bātin TUNGGANG GĀGAH, who settled in Kĕlang; Bātin CHANGEI BĚSI, who lived in Jĕlĕbu; Bātin ĀLAM, who settled in Johor; Bātin PĚRWEL, who went across to Pagar-rŭyong; Bātin SIAM, who went to Siam; Bātin MĪNANG, who crossed to Mĕnangkābau; Bātin PAHANG, who settled in the country of that name; Bātin STAMBUL, who went to Stambul; and Bātin RĀJA, who ruled over Moar.

Pĕnghŭlus were first made by To' TĚRJĚLI, who placed one at Bĕrānang in Kĕlang, the To' KLĀNA PUTRĀ at Sungei Ujong, To' AKI SAMAN in Jĕlĕbu, To' MUTAN JANTAN, a woman, at Kwāla Moar, and her husband JANHAN PAHLĀWAN LĒLA PĚRKĀSA he removed to Johol: hence, to preserve the memory of the first female ruler, the

* "Rŭyong" is the "nibong," of which the fence round the RĀJA's place was made, (Areca nibong).

Dato' of Johol always wears his hair long, down to the waist.

The To' Klâna Putrâ of Sungei Ujong established the States of Rĕmbau and Nâning, placing his sons over them.

Lûkut was also established by the To' Klâna. The Dato' of Johol made Tĕrâchi, Gûnong Pâsir, Gĕmĕncheh, Jĕmpol and Âyĕr Kûning. Jĕlei was originally part of Johol, but afterwards broke away.

After the death of To' MÛTAN JANTAN, the succession passed to her nephews, and has since been held by males, but always passing through the female side, as in Nâning. After To' MÛTAN JANTAN came To' ULAR BĪSA (the poisonous snake), next To' MAHARĀJA GĀRANG, who was succeeded in turn by To' TĒNGAH, To' NARI, To' BUNCHIT (pot-belly), and the present Pĕnghĕlu To' ÊTA.

The first Râja was SALENGKAR ÂLAM of Bukit Guntang Pĕnyâring, (Ûlu Mĕnangkâbau). Guntang Pĕnyâring is said to be derived from "guntang," the shaking of the "jâring" (net) used to catch the Kĕlĕang (flying-fox) for the feast at which SALENGKAR ÂLAM was proclaimed Râja. After the feast they descended the hill (Bukit Guntang Pĕnyâring) and cleared the settlement of Mĕnangkâbau for the Râja. The Bâtin MĪNANG previously mentioned remained in the jungle.

The "Kâbau" in "Mĕnangkâbau" is taken from hundreds of buffaloes which issued from a hole in the ground behind the Râja's house; the chief of them had his horns and hoofs covered with gold; on being chased by the people, they all returned to the hole before they could be caught, and disappeared, and were never seen again; hence the name, as they won in the race for the hole.

KHATIB MĀLIM SĒLĒMAN, the son of SALENGKAR ÂLAM, came over to the Bukit Pĕrâja in Ûlu Jĕmpol with a *pârang*,* a *pâtîl*,† a *pahat*,‡ and a *kâchîp*,§ in pursuit of a beautiful Princess, and after searching in vain for food, he went to sleep near an enormous bambu a fathom in diameter. During the night the Princess appeared and cooked him some food, and passed the night with him, but disap-

* Wood-cutter's knife.

† Adze or hatchet, according to the turn given to the blade.

‡ Chisel.

§ Betel-nut clippers.

peared at dawn.

The Khatib tried in vain to cut the bambu, in which the Princess had told him he would find her, using in turn the *pârang*, *pâtîl*, and *pahat*. Then he tried the *káčhip* on the point of the bambu with success, after which he was able to split it downwards, when the Princess fell out, and he secured her, and she did not disappear again; then she was conducted on horseback by many followers with her husband to Bukit Pěrája, where they both disappeared; but there they both live invisible to this day; their horses in full trappings are occasionally to be seen in certain favourable seasons. If their aid is invoked with burning of *kěmnian*, they will come and "běchâra" and then disappear. The Princess was quite fair in complexion and her hair white and seven fathoms in length.

All the different tribes of aborigines are said to be merely varieties of the original Měntra, who also exist in the Měnangkâbau country, but, says the Bâtin, perhaps they have turned Malay.

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